to the farmers of Punjab in the shape of free water/electricity by early next year; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The World Bank has not asked the Central Government to instruct Punjab Government to withdraw subsidies given to the farmers of Punjab in the shape of free water/electricity by early next year. But in course of appraisal of the Punjab Water Resources Management Project (PWRMP) in 1996-97, the Bank had stipulated that Government of Punjab adopt a Water Resources Policy which, *inter alia*, would promote that the users and polluters contribute to the investment cost and pay for full Operation and Maintenance of Public Water Supply Systems, whether for irrigation, power, domestic or industrial. Following announcement of the provision of free water and power for farmers in February, 1997, the Bank declined to process the project further.

Study by IDBI on restructuring of TCOs

*404. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study for restructuring and strengthening of seventeen Technical Consultancy Organisations (TCOs), to equip them to meet the challenge of the changed environment and envisage their future role was made by IDBI;

(b) if so, the salient findings of the study and action taken by Government on each recommendation;

(c) whether any specific action plan has been contemplated for the North-East where the services of NEITCO are being increasingly felt necessary for accelerating the pace of economic development; and

(d) if so, the target set and present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALA SAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) has appointed a reputed consultant to independentiy study the performance of all

Technical Consultancy Organisations (TCOs) and suggest measures to be adopted for their revival and growth. The consultant is expected to submit the report by September, 2000.

(c) and (d) Action would be initiated by IDBI, in consultation with other sponsoring institutions and the concerned State Governments after the report from the consultant has been received. The study covers North-Eastern region as well and specific recommendations relating to the North Eastern region would be considered by the IDBI and other sponsoring institutions upon receipt of the report.

Amendments to the Major Port Trusts Act

†*405. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Major Port Trusts Act for mobilising the resources and whether the participation of private sector or joint venture will be encouraged by this amendment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) No, Sir. For mobilising private investment in major ports, no amendment to Major Port Trusts Act, 1963, is necessary. The Major Port Trusts (Amendment) Act, 2000, which has received the assent of the President on 9th June, 2000 has a provision which enables private sector participation in major ports through formation of Joint Venture with the respective Port Trust.

(b) Does not arise.

Mechanism for protecting internet contents

*406. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. (MTNL) has asked for evolving a mechanism to protect internet contents; and

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.